

# Electronics Recycling

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## INTRODUCTION

Discarded electronics, also known as E-waste, is the fastest growing portion of the municipal waste stream. While other types of municipal waste are decreasing, e-waste is growing by close to 5% annually. State and local government agencies have identified e-waste as their most significant waste problem with respect to management costs and potential environmental impacts. E-waste has become a primary concern as a result of the proliferation of new electronic products combined with their rapid obsolescence, low recycling rate and their potential to contain hazardous materials. Computer monitors and other equipment with Cathode Ray Tubes (CRT's) contain lead & mercury as well as other toxic materials that could be released to the environment if not handled properly. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, almost 2.4 million tons of electronics were disposed of in 2009, an increase of more than 120 percent from 1999. Of this amount, only 25 percent were collected for recycling. The rest ended up in landfills and incinerators. This includes computers, televisions, stereos, printers, copiers and mobile devices.<sup>1</sup>

The export of electronic waste to developing countries is also of concern. Some electronic recyclers in the United States are sending discarded products to China, India, Pakistan, and other developing countries, where labor costs are lower and environmental regulations are often lax or not enforced. There, recycling is often conducted without precautions to ensure worker safety and to prevent toxic releases to the environment, according to the Product Stewardship Institute.

## REGULATIONS

### King County Waste Acceptance Rule

As of October 1, 2005, King County residents and businesses may no longer dispose of computers, laptops, monitors, TVs and cell phones in the garbage or at transfer stations.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ncsl.org/research/environment-and-natural-resources/e-waste-recycling-legislation.aspx>  
EP\_Products\_Electronics Recycling.docx, Rev 3/16/2016

King County Code requires working equipment to be surplus for redistribution within the county, donated or auctioned. Non-working equipment is recycled through a local recycler, through the Washington State contract for electronics recycling services that include strict requirements for recycling electronic components domestically.



### **King County e-Stewards Policy**

18.20.50 Computer and electronic equipment recycling by departments - standards.

- A. Departments shall use recyclers that meet the Basel Action Network e-Stewards Standard for Responsible Recycling and Reuse of Electronic Equipment or comparable standard for all their nonworking computer and electronic equipment. These standards must include, but are not limited to:
  1. Demonstrating that no hazardous e-waste is exported to a country that is not a member of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development for refurbishment or recycling;
  2. No prison or child labor are used in the recycling process;
  3. Safe on-site handling of hazardous e-waste and monitoring of workplace toxins; accountability for the entirety of toxic materials throughout the downstream recycling chain; and
  4. Provision of site-closure plans for those sites associated with recycling processes where potentially hazardous processing technologies have been used.
- B. For the purposes of this section, computers and electronic equipment includes, but is not limited to, monitors, televisions, central processing units, circuit boards, power supplies, laptop computers, peripherals, video cassette recorders, digital video discs, cables, keyboards, mice, fax machines, printers, cell phones, telephones and stereos.
- C. The procurement and contract services section of the department of executive services will ensure that an electronics recycling contract is available for all King County agencies to use. In preparing such an electronics recycling contract, the procurement and contract services section shall assure that standards other than the e-Stewards standards used by recyclers have been determined by the solid waste division of the department of natural resources and parks to be comparable.

### **City of Seattle Municipal Code**

Prohibits the disposal of computer monitors, TV's or any other device that contains cathode ray tubes (CRTs) from any residential or commercial customer in the municipal solid waste or at the Seattle transfer stations. ([Seattle Municipal Code 21.36.025](#) – Unlawful Disposal; [21.36.026](#) – Household Hazardous Waste; [21.36.029](#) – Small Quantity Generator)

### **Washington's Electronic Product Recycling Program**

Since 2009, a new law began requiring manufacturers to provide electronic product recycling services for televisions, desktop computers, laptop computers, and monitors at no cost to households, small businesses, charities, school districts, and small governments

- [E-Cycle](#)
- [Electronic Product Recycling Program Chapter 173-900 WAC Regulation](#)

## USAGE HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE

King County agencies have been recycling obsolete computers, television sets and other electronic equipment with a local recycling firm since 2002. There is growing concern about the ultimate effects of landfill, disassembly, or incineration of computers and electronics, which contain a variety of heavy metals and other toxic constituents. Of special concern are cathode ray tubes (CRTs), which are no longer accepted at the King County landfill, because they contain large amounts of lead.

King County Code requires working equipment to be redistributed within the county or donated or auctioned. Non-working equipment is recycled through a local recycler, through the Washington State contract for electronics recycling services which requires that electronic components be recycled domestically.

In 2011, King County became the second county in the nation to earn the "e-Steward Enterprise" designation from the Basel Action Network's (BAN) standard for responsible recycling and reuse of electronic equipment, ensuring that all County agencies recycle electronic waste such as computer monitors, TVs, and cell phones in an environmentally responsible way.

In 2012, the County Council passed legislation (Ordinance [17085](#)) requiring BAN's e-Stewards® certification, or equivalent, of contracting vendors, to ensure that e-waste recycling is being held to the highest environmental standards. The current contractor is a certified e-Stewards® recycler, reaching this elite status in 2011. County agencies recycled 68,099 pounds of electronic equipment, 6,820 pounds of CRT's, 1,253 LCD monitors, 14,447 pounds of televisions, 1,546 pounds of copiers, and 6,356 pounds of batteries through this contract last year.

## BID AND CONTRACT LANGUAGE

### King County's Supply Contract/ State of Washington Contract

King County uses the State of Washington contract for [Recycling Services-Electronics & Spent Light \(#00615\)](#)



Contract language excerpt:

Ecolights Northwest (Total Reclaim, Inc parent company) will provide services for collection, transportation, recycling, and disposal of spent lighting (lamps, tubes, and bulbs) and lighting ballasts, also used electronics including but not limited to computers, monitors and televisions, and other electronic equipment and peripherals. They will also provide a certificate of recycling/disposal for all materials collected. The program's intent is to keep spent lighting and electronics out of landfills, manage any dangerous waste and recycle materials as feasible.

## ENVIRONMENTAL

1. Contractor shall maintain a comprehensive environmental management system that shall be in compliant within one (1) year of the contract effective date as ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 or other environmental management systems acceptable by the state. Environmental management system shall be audited annually by a 3rd party for assurance of environmental responsibility.
2. Contractor will be highly encouraged to follow the principles of the eStewards Standard Electronics Recycler's Pledge of True Stewardship or a similar declaration acceptable to the state, as applicable to the electronic waste material, <http://e-stewards.org/learn-more/for-enterprises/overview/whats-the-e-stewards-standard/>
3. Contractor's/Sub Contractors conducting business in King County are required to adhere to King County Code 18.20.050 Computer and electronic equipment recycling by departments - standards.

- a. Departments shall use recyclers that meet the Basel Action Network e-Stewards Standard for Responsible Recycling and Reuse of Electronic Equipment or comparable standard for all their nonworking computer and electronic equipment. These standards must include, but are not limited to: Demonstrating that no hazardous e-waste is exported to a country that is not a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development for refurbishment or recycling;
  - i. No prison or child labor are used in the recycling process;
  - ii. Safe on-site handling of hazardous e-waste and monitoring of workplace toxins; accountability for the entirety of toxic materials throughout the downstream recycling chain; and
  - iii. Provision of site-closure plans for those sites associated with recycling processes where potentially hazardous processing technologies have been used.
  - iv. For the purposes of this section, computers and electronic equipment includes, but is not limited to, monitors, televisions, central processing units, circuit boards, power supplies, laptop computers, peripherals, video cassette recorders, digital video discs, cables, keyboards, mice, fax machines, printers, cell phones, telephones and stereos.
  - v. The procurement and contract services section of the department of executive services will ensure that an electronics recycling contract is available for all King County agencies to use. In preparing such an electronics recycling contract, the procurement and contract services section shall assure that standards other than the e-Stewards standards used by recyclers have been determined by the solid waste division of the department of natural resources and parks to be comparable. (Ord. 17085 § 2, 2011. Formerly K.C.C. 10.16.075).
4. Contractor shall meet and maintain Preferred Performance Standards as defined by the Washington Department of Ecology's "Environmentally Sound Management and Performance Standards for Direct Processors" – WAC 173-900, as applicable to the electronic waste materials, <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/eproductrecycle/processor.html>.
5. Contractor shall have a methodology in place to maintain awareness of any new, modified or pending environmental legislation or regulation to ensure operational and scrap/disposal compliance.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- [BAN's e-Steward Program](#) – Basel Action Network e-Stewards Recyclers, have committed to high standards of environmental and worker protection in the processing of e-waste
- [E-Cycle Washington](#) - Washington now has a FREE, convenient and environmentally responsible recycling program for computers, monitors, laptops and televisions for households and small businesses.
- [Take It Back Network](#) lists recycling options throughout King County
- [Product Stewardship Institute](#)

## VENDOR INFORMATION

King County's Current Contract

[Ecolights Northwest](#)

Phone: (888) 214-2327 or (206)343-7443

- King County CPA #5767687 (based on [State of Washington contract #00615](#))